

Message Text

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ACTION SCA-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 L-03 SP-02 CIAE-00 INR-07
NSAE-00 OC-06 CCO-00 A-01 SS-15 EB-07 CPR-01
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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8495
INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 8220

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: CGEN, PFOR, ACOM, AFSP, UR, US
SUBJECT: US/USSR CONSULAR TALKS - SECOND ROUND
THIRD SESSION - JUNE 8, 1977,
COURIER PROBLEMS AT CONGEN LENINGRAD

REFS: A. MOSCOW 8152, B. MOSCOW 7956, C. 76 MOSCOW 13495
D. 76 LENINGRAD 1371

SUMMARY: REMINDED AT THIRD SESSION OF CONSULAR TALKS OF NON-PAPER
PRESENTED ON LENINGRAD POUCH PROBLEMS AT AIRPORT AND ON
LENINGRAD-HELSINKI TRAIN, SOVIETS CLAIMED THEY ALSO HAVE
AIRPORT POUCH PROBLEMS IN NEW YORK AND SAN FRANCISCO AND
THAT 1947 RAILWAY AGREEMENT WITH FINLAND PLUS SECURITY
CONSIDERATIONS DICTATE FINLAND BOUND POUCHES BE CONVEYED
IN COMPARTMENT WITH COURIERS.
END SUMMARY.

1. DEPUTY CHIEF MFA CONSULAR ADMINISTRATION, I. M.
GOROKHOV, ASSERTED AT THIRD SESSION OF CONSULAR TALKS
ON JUNE 8 THAT COURIERS ARRIVING BY AIR FROM MEXICO AND
OTTAWA AT NEW YORK AND SAN FRANCISCO SUFFER PROBLEMS OF
POUCH TRANSFERRAL SIMILAR TO THOSE DESCRIBED IN EMBASSY
NON-PAPER (REF B) AS EXISTING IN LENINGRAD. HE WAS
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SECONDED BY CONSULAR ADMINISTRATION COUNSELOR N. G. KUSTOV,
WHO ADDED THAT THEIR COURIERS EVEN HAVE ADDITIONAL PROBLEMS,
WHICH HE DID NOT SPECIFY, BEYOND THE METAL-DETECTOR CHECK
AT SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORT. GOROKHOV PROMISED A MEMORANDUM
ON SOVIET COURIER PROBLEMS AT AMERICAN AIRPORTS.

2. GOROKHOV CITED 1947 "AGREEMENT ON DIRECT SOVIET-

FINNISH RAILWAY COMMUNICATIONS" AS PRECLUDING CONVEYANCE OF COURIER-ESCORTED MAIL BAGS IN BAGGAGE CAR FROM LENINGRAD TO HELSINKI. HE CITED THE AGREEMENT AS STIPULATING THAT DIPLOMATIC MAIL ESCORTED BY COURIER "OCCUPIES SEPARATE COMPARTMENT WITH COURIER," AND SUGGESTED THAT ONLY RECOURSE WOULD BE TO NEGOTIATE A SEPARATE AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE SOVIET AND AMERICAN SIDES, OPINING THAT SUCH AN AGREEMENT WOULD NOT BE IN CONTRADICTION WITH THEIR 1947 AGREEMENT WITH FINLAND. HE PROMISED TO PROVIDE COPY OF THE 1947 AGREEMENT AND COULD NOT ACCOUNT FOR FACT THAT MAIL RETURNING FROM FINLAND TO LENINGRAD IS CARRIED IN THE BAGGAGE CAR. AS AN ADDITIONAL OBSTACLE TO CONGEN LENINGRAD'S REQUEST, SOVIET SIDE ALSO ALLUDED TO THEIR RESPONSIBILITY FOR SAFETY OF MAIL BAGS SHOULD THEY BE CONVEYED IN BAGGAGE CAR AS BEING BASIC REASON FOR INCLUSION OF RELEVANT PROVISION IN 1947 AGREEMENT.

3. REMINDED THAT HIS PREDECESSOR REZNICHENKO HAD ASSURED US SIDE DURING FIRST ROUND OF CONSULAR TALKS THAT THE LENINGRAD POUCH PROBLEMS CONSTITUTED NO GREAT DIFFICULTY AND COULD BE SOLVED (REF C) GOROKHOV REMARKED THAT REZNICHENKO HAD MEANT ONLY THAT THESE PROBLEMS WOULD BE LOOKED INTO AND REITERATED SOVIET WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE THEM.

4. DEPARTMENT REQUESTED TO PROVIDE INFORMATION ON ANY PROBLEMS WITH PROCEDURE FOR TRANSFERRING SOVIET POUCHES AT NEW YORK AND SAN FRANCISCO AIRPORTS. EMBASSY PRESUMES SOVIETS MAKE NO USE OF SURFACE POUCH, BUT REQUESTS
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DEPARTMENT INVESTIGATE POSSIBILITIES OF RETALIATION.

5. COMMENT: IN BRINGING UP ALLEGED 1947 AGREEMENT WHICH HAS ALREADY BEEN RENDERED MEANINGLESS FROM FINNISH SIDE BY THE SEPARATE CONVEYANCE OF MAIL BAGS IN BAGGAGE CAR FROM HELSINKI TO LENINGRAD AND EQUALY MEANINGLESS FROM SOVIET SIDE BY SAME PRACTICE ON POUCH RUNS FROM MOSCOW TO HELSINKI, SOVIETS SEEM TO BE REACHING FAR IN THEIR EFFORT TO PRESENT A TOUGH BARGAINING STANCE ON THESE ISSUES IN SHARP CONTRAST TO THEIR APPARENT ATTITUDE LAST YEAR. SO FAR AS CONCERNS THE AIRPORT ISSUE, THE SOVIET CLAIM ABOUT AIRPORT PROCEDURES IN NEW YORK AND SAN FRANCISCO, IF TRUE, WOULD APPEAR TO BE A LEGITIMATE COMPLAINT. EMBASSY WILL AGAIN PRESS MINISTRY ON SPECIFIC NATURE OF THEIR COMPLAINTS AND, UPON FURTHER INFORMATION AND ADVICE FROM THE DEPARTMENT ON THIS MATTER, WILL MAKE ANOTHER PRESENTATION.

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